1: Gillin E-5 (1932-33)1936 SR9 Carib SR9

354 The fireplaces are important parts of every house, not from the structural point of view, but because they are the centers around which food is partaken and from which warmth radiates to protect the blanketless Caribs from the sudden chill of the jungle nights. No particular construction is necessary for the fireplace, although one spot is usually selected for the fire, on which the cooking is done. The pots are set directly upon the coals and are supported by the surrounding fire wood. The cassava pan, on the other hand, is supported on rough stones at a height of from four to eight inches above the coals. At night several supplementary fires may be kindled in various parts of the house to warm various hammocks. Figure 5 shows a diagrammatic representation of the nighttime arrangement of a medium sized house. An important [412] accessory of the fire is the fan, which incidently is seldom used for cooling the skin. In a settlement a fire practically never has to be started from scratch, because somewhere among the houses is usually one which has not been allowed to go out. To insure the continuance of the fire during absence of the occupants from the house, large logs are usually left radiating from the embers so that their ends retain living coals for a long time after the flame has [313] died down. Konta wood is considered good as a fire-holder. In starting a new fire from embers, fine splinters of dry wood are heaped in a conical pile over the embers and brought to a flame by blowing with the mouth or by fanning. The Indians are adept at securing dry or resinous kindling wood, even in a heavy rain. The wettest looking piece of wood in the jungle, if it is solid, can be trimmed down to its dry core, which can be shaved into kindling.

372 When confronted with the necessity of starting an entirely new 177 fire, the Carib usually relies, in these days, upon one of the following methods: matches, gunpowder and cartridge caps, or iron and flint. Safety matches may be bought at the trading posts at the standard price of ten cents for a one-cent box, and those natives who have any contact at all with the shops usually have at least one box of matches stored somewhere about the house, carefully protected from cold and damp. Naturally, these conveniences of white civilization are used only with the greatest parsimony. In emergencies, a man with ammunition can start a fire by exploding a cartridge cap into a small pinch of gun powder. Many of the men possess strike-a-light outfits consisting of a piece of flint and

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a bit of old iron. The spark is struck into dry moss carried with 372
the outfit in a small basketry wallet. Several of my informants 177

[342]

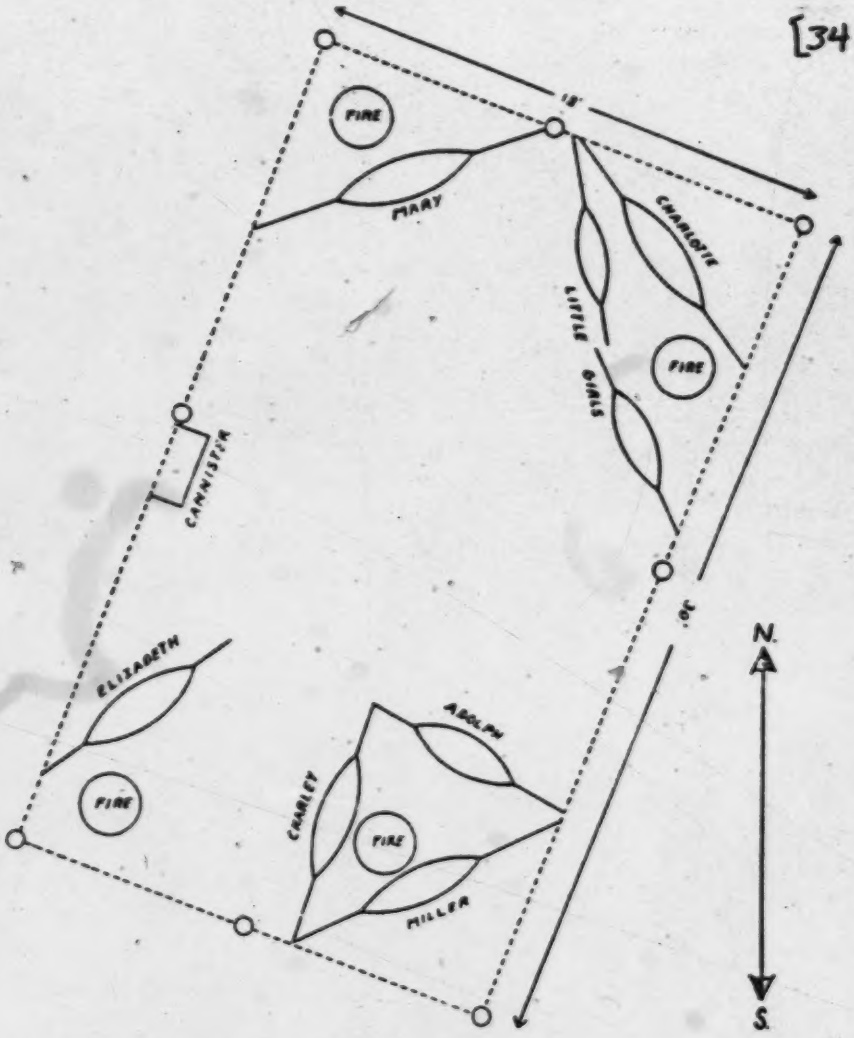

FIGURE 5

Plan of the interior of house at Sawari during the night.

claimed the ability to make fire by rubbing two sticks of wood together, but in none of their repeated trials did they succeed. This method is apparently very seldom used now.

824 direct plant-to-plant cycling characteristic of the rain forest
241 floral community, energy is diverted for human consumption. The diverse floral species are replaced with species selected to yield food sources. Fields are prepared and maintained in keeping with this use.

242 The soil is selected with regard to its role as a support for the
241 plants. A preferred site is a hillside. The gradient allows for drainage. Also, a mixture of sand and clay will deter the water retention which would rot root crops in predominantly clayey soil. The clay component of this mixed soil protects the seeds and young plants from the full impact of heat from direct sunlight. Only a small field, about one acre, is usually cut at one time. Field shapes tend to be circular. Tall trees are left on the periphery to allow partial shade on the seeds and young plants.

241 The cutting is done to allow burning just before the rainy
[221] seasons that occur from November to January and from May to July.
[132] Planting follows burning. Previously, fire and stone-edged implements alone were used. However, iron-edged tools are now common in
241 412
• [372] the Upper Barama area. Digging sticks for planting seeds remain in
*[122] use.

241 The different cultigens are intermingled, making use of micro-environmental conditions. For example, sugar cane plants may be located to take advantage of a few square feet along a creek bed. Pineapples may be placed in an ash line. Young tobacco plants may be located to be partially shaded by a stump until mature enough to tolerate the sun.